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Senator Stamas presents White Pine Award for environmental excellence to Midland couple

Lansing – Earlier today state Sen. Tony Stamas (R-Midland) honored Joe and Willi Bevirt for their hard work and dedication to the environment.

As longtime Midland residents and Dow Chemical Co. retirees, the couple has twice restored a historic Native American trail known as the Mackinac Trail.

“This couple has so selflessly given their time and labor to ensure this historic trail remains intact,” Stamas said. “Thanks to their hard work and dedication, Michiganders will be able to enjoy the beauty of the Mackinac Trail for generations.”

In 1958 Joe Bevirt led a group of 25 Explorer Scouts on an 11-day hike from Midland to Mackinaw City along the trail.

For the next three years, Bevirt and his scouts worked at restoring the trail, posting signs and painting blazes on trees to mark the path. After years of use and wear, the state Department of Natural Resources contacted Bevirt to lead a trail restoration effort.

In the spring and summer of 1998, the Bevirts spent 44 days relocating more than half the trail they had marked 40 years ago. For the next four months the pair, with help from Scouter Don White, located and rough-marked the trail.

The next year, hundreds of Scouts from the Lake Huron Area Council joined the Bevirts, helping clear brush and fallen trees, painting tree markers, posting trail signs, and building bridges for hikers to cross.

(More)

Chair of the Midland to Mackinac Trail Commission, Joe Bevirt has 40 Scout troops assigned to look after the 210-mile trail. Each troop maintains a four to six-mile stretch of the trail.

The Bevirts joined Stamas on the Senate floor today, where he presented them with the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence and a Senate Tribute for their accomplishment.

Modeled after former President Bush's Thousand Points of Light program, the White Pine Award promotes local environmental activities and recognizes individuals who have made a consistent and enduring commitment to protect our environment.

The Midland to Mackinac Trail was originally used by Native Americans to transport copper from the Upper Peninsula to trade for other goods.

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Photo Advisory: photographs of Sen. Stamas congratulating Joe and Willi Bevirt is available on the Senate Majority Photowire at:

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/

Dec. 16, 2003 – Sen. Tony Stamas (R- Midland) welcomed Joe and Willi Bevirt to the state Capitol earlier today. The Midland residents were greeted by Stamas and escorted onto the Senate floor for an award presentation. The couple received a Senate Tribute and the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence from Stamas. Pictured (from left) are Willi and Joe Bevirt and Sen. Stamas.

Dec. 16, 2003 – Midland residents Joe and Willi Bevirt traveled to Lansing today and were honored by Sen. Tony Stamas (R-Midland) with the presentation of a Senate Tribute and the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence. Pictured (from left) are Joe and Willi Bevirt as they pause for a photograph with Sen. Stamas and their well deserved-awards.